Best of New England 2009
Yankee Magazine.

Best Sushi - Statewide 2009 & 2010
Connecticut Magazine.

"For sheer, gutsy inventiveness, nothing I've eaten this year beats New Haven's Miya. When the young chef...is at the stove, it is sublime and it is a joy to be in the presence of such an original mind."
The New York Times.

miya's

established by mom in 1982
because man cannot live on rice alone

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"On Friday, because the universe requires such meetings, I introduced ——— to Miya's, the home of weird sushi in New Haven. This is a restaurant where you can order rolls made with curried tuna, goat cheese and cranberries; or krill, mozzarella, honey, banana, and burdock; or shrimp, potato skins, and havarti cheese; and they work. Do they ever. And they are all named things like the Water Piglet Roll, the Bad Tempered Geisha Boy, the Bestu James Bondo Ever Roll...You get the idea. We ordered a plethora of sushi based generally on the strangeness of their components (and the occasional classical Japanese literary reference) and were not disapointed. I should have stolen a menu so I could describe precisely what we got and what went into it, but I was particularly impressed by whatever ——— ordered that flat-out shouldn't have worked–it was krill, mozzarella, et cetera deal and Gaudior's vegetarian roll with havarti cheese. This is a restaurant that has a record of Puccini's Madam Butterfly in the ladies' room and never worries about anyone stealing it. Miya's is worth its insane expense."
Savoy.

The Northeast's first and only sustainable sushi restaurant with the largest vegetarian sushi menu in the world.

"There is no place in the world like Miya's;
you are changing not only the
way people think about sushi,
but how sushi affects our oceans."

- Casson Trennor,
Time Magazine's Environmental Hero of the Year, 2009

okasan: mama

In 1982, mama opened New Haven County's first sushi bar. The restaurant was named Miya, after her baby daughter. This restaurant was the culmination of her life's ambition. My grandfather had owned a successful lumber company and my mother dreamed of doing business with him when she was old enough. In the 1950's, little girls from the countryside in Japan weren't encouraged to pursue careers in business.

Grandpa would sigh and compliment her, "if only you were a boy, you would make a great businessman." She wished that things were different; it wasn't fair being a girl.

In New Haven, cooking in a tiny apartment kitchen on Prospect Street, she put her university degree in nutrition to use by starting a catering business which would eventually become Miya's. After almost thirty years in business, my mother is still as passionate about Miya's as when she first began.

Often when I return from my trips, I find myself stunned by all of the improvements that my mother continues to make in the restaurant. More than anyone, she continues to drive Miya's full speed ahead.

"Maybe I will run a marathon," she thought aloud to me the other day. I didn't doubt she could, not even for a second.

boku: me

When I was little, living in Kyushu, Japan, my Grandmother would pickle green plums and cucumbers in ceramic pots as big as laundry hampers. We would eat these pickles at every meal with steamed rice, misoshiru, and fish so fresh that their eyes shimmered like a young John Travolta's.

I often miss my grandmother and Japan but I'm also so grateful for the worldly journey that my parents have allowed my life to become in America.

This cuisine is indebted to my mother, who is Japanese and to my father, who is Chinese. It is because of their differences that I adore and appreciate cultural diversity.

Just as importantly, this cuisine has been molded by everybody who has ever touched me in my life. This menu is my love letter to humanity. Thank you all for the love!

In my cuisine,

In my cuisine, I use the technique of sushi as a medium to explore what it is to be human. I see our work at Miya's Sushi as the logical progression of sushi as it inevitably evolves into food that is cross-cultural, and more expressive of a human race that is educated enough to both respect each other's differences, and to appreciate that, in spite of those differences we are, in the end, family. In every recipe of mine, cultures harmonize in ways that the people of the world have not yet figured out how to accomplish.

There is no religion where food is not used as an expression of the holy. Food brings people together. Food is a way to communicate that transcends language. Food helps us aspire to be more. Food must be idealistic and romantic. And that is why man cannot live on rice alone.

...in my cuisine,

We are aware that the restaurant industry has a very harmful impact on the environment; in particular, the traditional cuisine of sushi is destroying our oceans. Therefore, we try to maintain a restaurant in as ecologically responsible manner as possible. We do our best to not use ingredients that are either overfished or that in their production have a negative impact on the environment. As a result, half of our vast menu is vegetable-centered; the other half does not utilize traditional sushi ingredients such as Bluefin Tuna, Toro, Big Eye Tuna, certain Yellowfin, Unagi, Red Snapper, Maine Sea Urchin, Octopus, and so on. Instead, we've created dishes that include unconventional sushi ingredients such as Catfish, which, unlike the farming of many farmed fish, are grown in confined ponds that make it virtually impossible to cross-contaminate other species or destroy the aquatic ecosystem around them.

Miya's Sushi appeals to a growing population of sushi lovers who care enough about our planet to change the way they eat; they realize that consumerism, along with our zeal for exotic seafood, is sucking the breath out of our oceans. Together with our customers, we strive to eat in such a way that is nourishing for our bodies, our planet, and our souls.

it's the great pumpkin, miso
pumpkin & vegetable miso soup/1.00

vegetable gyoza
steamed vegetable dumplings with sesame soy dip/3.75

oktoberflöt
in germany, children drink beer. alcohol is not good for children. this appetizer float is designed for the child in you. honey & hibiscus flower beer with a scoop of vanilla ice cream. 5.75

salad days
we would like to thank the urban foodshed collaborative, barnard environmental magnet school & yale farm for our lovingly & expertly grown organic vegetables/6.75

tokyo fro
hip hop is the most popular music of japanese youth & has made the afro tokyo's most popular hairstyle; to have japanese hair processed into an afro costs over a thousand dollars at a trendy hair stylist. this recipe was inspired by the afro; it looks & tastes exactly like a japanese processed fro, drizzled with a delicious chef secret sauce. /6.75

deep fried ho rensoe ensalada
light & airy deep fried locally grown organic spinach sprinkled with atlantic sea salt & roasted sesame seeds/8.75

sweet mother's milk
a whole steamed artichoke served with our sauce made from spicy homemade middle eastern pureed jalapeno makdoos. for a lengthy expository on this dish, see page 36/13.75

hoi polloi salmonidae
arctic char with capers, tomatoes, onions, olive oil & lemon soy sauce, served in an edible tortilla flower cup/13.75

bleu plate especial
a ten-piece sampler of assorted bun-invented sushi rolls for a child-like appetite/15.75

veggie bleu plate especial
a ten-piece assortment of our more interesting original vegetable sushi rolls good for a light appetite/15.75

nigiri universal
twelve pieces of miya's style nigiri sushi: korean chili pepper salmon, tuna, white tuna (aka escolar); ginger tuna tataki, tea leaf aloha. also includes yellowtail & tilapia/15.75

sunshine sashimi dinner
nine spice-roasted hemp tilapia, ginger tuna tataki con sauvignon blanc sesame soy & kimchee pepper blackened fish/38.75

moonlight sashimi dinner
hoi polloi salmon, two fish cha cha, tea leaf aloha fish & kung fu tuna/38.75

the very hungry inch worm - lunch
this is the best lunch you will ever have! let the experts decide! munch your way through a five course lunch of bun originals. vegetarian & kosher options too
20.75/person/special ends at 3:00pm or so

the very hungry caterpillar - dinner
is that lean pocket you had for lunch leaving you hungry? munch your way through a ten course dinner of bun originals & emerge gorgeous & carefree as a butterfly! dazzling vegetarian & kosher options available too
38.75/person

kanibaba[1]
quite possibly the crown jewel of my cuisine - asian crabs, that I catch myself, topping a roll of seasoned potato-skin wrapped around a blue crab & spinach, with toasted havarti cheese & lemon dill sauce 5 pieces/48.75

the greatest sushi south of the mason-dixon[2]
fried catfish n' okra, grits, american style cheddar cheese, spring onions, parsley n' spice - fried crispy, green tomato like, in cornmeal. this dish pairs perfectly with jazz 1 piece of dixieland one hit wonder/13.75

the devil's black fish sampler[3]
korean kimchee blackened arctic char, albacore tuna & escolar nigiri - seared in super-high heat so that the inside of the fish stays raw while the outside is as hot & black as the devil's soul 3 pieces/6.75

ginger tuna tataki
seaweed seared albacore tuna, topped with scallions & ginger garlic roasted-sesame sauvignon blanc soy salsa 3 nigiri piees/6.75

two fish cha cha
escolar (aka super white tuna) seared with tuna. a fascinating contrast in which one fish seasons the other resulting in an entirely new flavor experience 3 pieces/6.75

tea leaf aloha fish[4]
nigiri style escolar (aka white tuna) seared in a parched earth-tasting green tea spice rub 3 pieces/6.75

wabisabi salmon roll[10]
inspired by tanizaki. delicately seared arctic char, flying fish caviar, avocado, wrapped in hand-picked wild grape leaves simmered in salmon bone stock & drizzled in olive oil 8 pieces/15.75

tyger, tyger, burning bright in the forest[5]
of the night, tempura tilapia, goat cheese & flying fish caviar, apricots, avocado, pickled radish & homemade african berbere mix, wrapped in our freshly made ethiopian teff grain crepe 4 pieces/15.75

rabbibaba
tempura canadian farmed arctic char wrapped in potato skin infused with salmon bone stock & topped with torch toasted danish havarti cheese & lemon dill sauce 4 pieces/20.75

ebibaba
tempura shrimp wrapped in potato skin infused with shrimp stock & topped with torch-toasted danish havarti cheese & lemon dill sauce 4 pieces/20.75

the softest french kisses
ridiculously sexy, warm scallop sashimi in a savory garlic oyster sauce. for a lengthy expository narrative on how this dish came to be, see page 33 5 pieces/28.75

nine spice tilapia[7]
ancient chinese-style fresh water fish sashimi seasoned with our chinese firecracker sake, citrus & spices.
10 thin slices/13.75

sakura sashimi[8]
fresh water fish infused with the sweet earthy juice of beets then seasoned with coarse salt & a squeeze of lime - served partly frozen, inuit style 5 thin slices/18.75

the sky is falling! roll
whole wheat tempura fried organic free range chicken little, aspargus & brie cheese rolled in rice & topped with toasted havarti cheese & our lemon dill sauce 4 pieces/13.75

kung fu tuna
albacore tuna, batterfried rare & drizzled with our homemade pureed spicy pepper makdoos sauce. 2 slices/22.75

whole grain teriyaki rolls8
the contrapuntal ingredients plus wild rice, koshihikari rice, quinoa, amaranth, millet & oats, resulting in a stormy symphony of flavors & textures.

ginger eggplant teriyaki roll9
please go tp page 21 for a brilliant description of this roll

chicken teriyaki roll8
organic chicken breast, broccoli, mushroom, pineapple, cranberries, almonds, burdock root & homemade teriyaki sauce wrapped in rice 5 pieces/15.75

shrimp & avocado teriyaki roll9
bitish columbian spot prawn, avocado, broccoli, roasted garlic cloves, mush- rooms & spicy miso paste in our homemade teriyaki sauce wrapped in rice 5 pieces/22.75

SEAFOOD ROLLS

UNSWEETENED KOSHIHIKARI RICE WITH QUINOA, OAT GROATS BROWN RICE, AMARANTH, MILLET & FLAX SEED

ALL SEALIFE SUSTAINABLY CAUGHT

chicharrón arctic char skin & asparagus roll 5 pieces, like fried pork skin but much better for you/2.75

spicy catfish with black bean 5 pieces, mississippi farmed catfish is one of the most sustainable fish in the world/2.75

california roll 8 pieces, highly sustainable mock crab. /2.75

philadelphia roll 8 pieces, smoked wild atlantic salmon & cream cheese/2.75

spicy tilapia roll 8 pieces, domestic farmed izumidai. "in the u.s.most tilapia is farmed in closed inland systems that guard against escapes and pollution" - monterey bay aquarium/2.75

spicy yellowfin roll 8 pieces, troll or pole caught atlantic yellowfin/ "there is little or no bycatch when yellowfin is caught with troll or pole-and-line gear. However, longlines result in large bycatch, including threatened or endangered species such as sea turtles, sharks and seabirds" - monterey bay aquarium/2.75

spicy albacore roll 8 pieces, "pacific troll-caught albacore from the u.s. or canada is one of the best ways to enjoy tuna at the sushi bar. with relatively strong stocks & a low bycatch rate, shiromaguro ... is an excellent choice" - sustainable sushi, a guide to saving the oceans one bite at a time/3.00

spicy arctic char roll 8 pieces, a delicate, lean red-fleshed fish in la familia salmonidae. canadian arctic char is farmed in land-based, closed systems and so there is a low risk of pollution and habitat effects - monerey bay aquarium/3.00

kimchee seared tuna 8 pieces, pole & troll yellowfin/3.75

kimchee seared escolar 8 pieces, aka white tuna/3.75

shrimp tempura 8 pieces, "british columbia spot prawns... well-managed & caught with environmentally responsible traps, are an excellent option" - sustainablesushi.net /3.75

sweet natured kabuki girl roll
clams are one of connecticut's most sustainable aquacuture products. more importantly, however, clams start off as males & sometimes become females! just like kabuki actors!
5 pieces/5.75

bad tempered geisha boy roll[11]
specifically invented for men who love big muscles. plump whole wheat tempura fried new zealand green mussels with thai pepper & scallions 5 pieces/5.75

kraken roll
whole wheat tempura fried calamari with spicy crushed indian pepper corns & scallions 5 pieces/5.75

happy chinese cock roll
fried organic chicken, broccoli & black bean 5 little pieces/5.75

romping with the goats roll
invented by maasai chefs of kenyan sushi bars. tempura tilapia, papaya, goat cheese & african spices 5 pieces/5.75

toshiro mifune roll
a lonely tempura shrimp samurai with broken artichoke hearts. pairs perfectly with sad music 5 pieces/5.75

oo la la mitzvah! roll
winner of the prestigious 2009 l'chayim world sushi award; tempura arctic char, brie cheese, avocado & ch'i energy 5 pieces/6.75

water piglet roll
like being kissed by aquatic swine. rare-fried albacore tuna, goat cheese & cranberries 5 pieces/6.75

italian stallion roll
inspired by sylvester stallone, this is our most masculine creation - rare-fried albacore tuna, new york mascarpone cheese, pistachios & orange marmalade 5 pieces/6.75

catfish blues roll[2]
spicy tempura catfish with asparagus, black beans, apricots & scallions. goes great with collard greens, creamed potatoes, a nice big milkshake & patsy cline 5 pieces/6.75

ravishing rangoon roll
maryland blue crab, asparagus, cream cheese & avocado 5 pieces/6.75

zoompa
crunchy pacific wild salmon with cream cheese & avocado 5 pieces/6.75

squiggly giggly roll[12]
raw squid, dried bonito tuna, ume & fresh japanese basil. 5 pieces/6.75

oaxacan dragon roll13
please refer to explanation on page 41
2 pieces/13.75

mishima sonata roll
tempura shrimp, banana, pepper-infused krill, avocado, peanut butter, honey, goat cheese in a whole grain roll tempura fried whole. for a lengthy expository narrative on how this roll came to be, see page 35
2 pieces/15.75

the best crunchy roll ever14
roasted chili seasoned escolar in a herb seasoned crunchy roll
5 pieces/8.75

ride the wild donkey roll9&17
british columbia spot prawns, papaya, apricots, brie cheese in a whole grain roll, tempura-fried whole. inspired by the complex sexuality of donkeys
5 pieces/15.75

happy together roll15
mackerel embracing a yellow fin tuna shiso roll; an interesting marriage of two fish in the mackerel family; the former rich in flavor, the latter, lean & light-flavored
5 pieces/15.75

doctor zhivago's favorite shrimp roll9
considered by many to be one of the greatest rolls to have come out of the russian revolution; shrimp tempura, caspian sea seaweed, avocado, roasted garlic in a whole grain roll, fried whole & served with a tangy sesame soy
5 pieces/15.75

mighty mother earth roll
smoked salmon draped on a roll of shrimp tempura, asparagus, salmon, mascarpone cheese, flying fish caviar & scallions. this is the philadelphia roll for the snooty gourmand
5 pieces/15.75

dancing samurai roll
this recipe is inspired by the virtuous samurai tradition of male on male love; spicy seared tuna embracing a roll of escolar (aka super white tuna) avocado & scallions
5 pieces/15.75

black-eyed squid roll16
inspired by catalan paella negra. rice seasoned with imported spanish squid ink & seafood stock then stuffed with fried squid, chinese black beans & scallions 5 pieces/22.75

peekaboo crab roll
a roll of blue crab meat topped with sliced avocado drizzled with our curry aioli sauce. 5 pieces/13.75

kwanzaa bananzaa roll
a very soulful roll: a coconut covered roll of british columbian spot prawns, avocado, cream cheese, papaya, burdock & hot sauce, of course. you must be african-american to order this
5 pieces/15.75

VEGETABLE ROLLS
OUR RECIPE OF UNSWEETENED KOSHIHIKARI RICE, QUINOA, OAT GROATS, BROWN RICE, AMARANTH, MILLET & FLAX

sweet potato roll 8 pieces/2.50

spicy broccoli roll 8 pieces/2.50

avocado roll 8 pieces/2.50

cucumber roll 8 pieces/2.50

ume shiso aka pickled plum & basil roll 8 pieces/2.50

natto aka fermented soybean roll 8 pieces/3.00

OUR RECIPE OF UNSWEETENED WHOLE GREAIN KOSHIHIKARI RICE, QUINOA, OAT GROATS, BROWN RICE, AMARANTH, MILLET & FLAX .

spinach roll 8 pieces/3.00

artichoke cumin roll 8 pieces/3.00

curry okra roll 8 pieces/3.00

spicy mushroom roll 8 pieces/3.00

curry cauliflower roll 8 pieces/3.00

spicy asparagus roll 8 pieces/3.00

spicy eggplant roll 8 pieces/3.00

lazzat un nisa roll
spinach, cream cheese & artichoke hearts
6 pieces/6.75

un chaud-lapin roll
asparagus, brie cheese, cucumber & avocado
6 pieces/6.75

kinoko roll
a staple of japanese mountain dwarves. tempura mushroom, goat cheese & avocado
6 pieces/8.75

foo man choo roll
a roll of asparagus, roasted garlic & black beans
6 pieces/6.75

charlie chan's ching chong roll
a roll of broccoli, roasted garlic & black beans
6 pieces/6.75

hot-headed cowgirl roll
a coconut-covered roll of cucumber, avocado, cream cheese, papaya, burdock & hot pepper. inspired by all strong women who like to ride bulls
6 pieces/8.75

rikki tikki roll
a roll of mushroom & cauliflower with roasted garlic, chinese black beans, scallions, hot pepper & pine nuts
6 pieces/8.75

mount fuji roll
japan's most famous mountain was named after this roll. seasoned eggplant on a roll of spicy miso avocado & scallions
6 pieces/8.75

japafrican queen roll5
sushi created by african bushmen for nourishment during thier seasonal migrations. eggplant, goat cheese, apricots, avocado, pickled radish, scallions & ethiopian berbere spice mix, wrapped in our freshly made teff grain crepe
4 pieces/10.75

chinese pygmy rodeo roll2
seasoned potato skin stuffed with cauliflower & scallions, topped with melted danish havarti cheese, & drizzled with lemon dill aioli 5 pieces/15.75

warm grapes falling on a happy head roll9
grape leaf wrapped roll of eggplant, avocado, pickled radish, scallions, hot pepper & olive oil 6 pieces/10.75

apple bottom sushi2
this is southern country style sushi. fried mushrooms n' okra, sharp cheddar cheese grits, spring onions, parsley n' spice - fried crispy in cornmeal like a green tomato - drizzled con salsa
1 obese, luscious piece of dixieland one hit wonder 10.75

kiss the smiling piggie roll

designed to look & taste exactly like the inside of a live pig's nostril. this roll contains no meat or pork. sweet potato, mango chutney & pine nuts. tastes better than a pork chop!
6 pieces/7.75

voompa roll14

a favorite sushi eaten by amazonian fire ants (pheidole chili-cephala). spicy crunchy eggplant, cream cheese, & scallions
6 pieces/8.75

killer squid roll

tempura udon noodles flavored with shiitake mushroom stock, hot peppers, chinese black beans & scallions; tastes & feels like deep-fried squid 6 pieces/8.75

three singing seaweed9

a roll of whole grains filled with caspian sea seaweed, fresh japanese basil, avocado & roasted garlic; deep-fried whole & served with a side of tangy sesame soy sauce
5 pieces/13.75

passion without words roll9&17

simple & down to earth, this roll is inspired by the flavors of french country cuisine; mushrooms, asparagus, brie cheese & whole grains; tempura-fried whole
6 pieces/15.75

ginger eggplant teriyaki roll9

asian eggplant, asparagus, sweet potato & avocado in a fresh ginger teriyaki sauce wrapped tightly in a whole grain roll & fried whole so that all of the ingredients steam together sumptuously 5 pieces/15.75

wandering poet9

a massive whole grain roll filled with vegetables. large enough to feed a starving artist for a full month
6 pieces/10.75

soothing & healthful sake
drives away any sorrow & increases joy of mind

sake sampler for two very close friends
before you commit to one, try all of our sakes! 42.75

chinese firecracker sake17
aged hot chili pepper & citrus sake. painfully euphoric;
contains over a thousand secret flavor components.
the perfect sake to sake bomb. not for the meek
18.75/small bottle or 35.75/large bottle or 9.75/glass

emerald witches' lips sake19
naturally citrusy, hand-picked wild green pinecone sake
22.75/small bottle or 44.75/large bottle or 9.75/glass

dragon lady sake
ginger, lemongrass & clover honey sake. victory drink of lesbian chinese pirates of the south china seas. also popular with sorority girls everywhere
18.75/small bottle or 35.75/large bottle or 8.75/glass

water of life sake
a rejuvinating honey sweetened gingseng & jasmine sake
22.75/small bottle or 44.75/large bottle or 9.75/glass

ultraviolet kisses sake20
salty, aged ume sake - like a mouthful of sunstreaked ocean
designed to be sipped slowly during your meal
28.75/bottle or 11.75/glass

cherokee sumac love potion21
a honey sweetened wild sumac sake
22.75/small bottle or 44.75/large bottle or 9.75/glass

the world's largest wine selection - bring your own wine
00.00/bottle - no corking fees ever
pair your own fine wines with our fine sushi

beeru22 cockutairu

drives away sorrow & increases joy of mind

swill beeru

pabst blue ribbon served poblano style with a lime. on the menu to serve poor artists, students, cheapskates & sake bombers. mild enough to be enjoyed in quantity
21 oz big boy sized glass/3.50 pitcher/9.75

shinjuku shimmy

a fresh hibiscus flower honey beer cocktail. a staple of japanese drag queens in kabuki theatre for centuries. interestingly, the shinjuku shimmy beeru has become england's favorite schoolboy beverage since it was popularized in the nineteen eighties by singer-songwriter boy george 6.75/pint

immigrant cocktail

this fiery cocktail utilizes the best of both eastern & western science; the spicy, citrusy, rejuvenating combination of our own chinese firecracker sake, club soda & coca-cola 6.75/pint

kama sutra

created to bring waves of raw desire to one's loins. this drink is responsible for the existence of over a billion indian lovers. an aphrodisiac more powerful than catholicism. a refreshing & titillating combination of fresh pureed vitamin-filled berries, sake & cerveza 8.75/pint

korean hongkee punchu

winner of the 2008 korean national cocktail award.
fresh watermelon sake, cerveza & a splash of chinese firecracker sake. korean women are considered, pound for pound, the most beautiful women in the world. each complex drink is distilled from the sweet essence of a thousand korean beauties 10.75/glass

*please take a peek at page 51 for a brief expository on our newest cockutairu creation that we are so excited about!

FINALE
dessert

seven deadly sushi23
a sinfully delicious roll of banana, peanut butter, strawberries & chocolate rolled in homemade mochi - deep fried & topped with baby scoops of hand-churned homemade rose petal ice cream*

1 bite/8.75

An important goal of ours is to have our cuisine return to the roots of sushi, meaning simply to use what we have available where we live.

When sushi first developed, it was inconceivable that people could get fresh fish from anywhere beyond their backyard. There are great ecological benefits to using sustainably produced fish, but if they are produced far away, some of those benefits are negated by the ecological cost of their transportation to our restaurant. Our challenge is not to import an exotic cuisine from afar, but to use seafood that is locally available, and to transform it into a regional cuisine that we can all be proud of, like Clam Chowder in New England, or Crab Cakes in the Chesapeake Bay.

There are many environmental problems that challenge the entire globe, and others that are specific to our community; a massive international issue is by-catch. While by-catch is not particularly a problem for us on Long Island Sound, there are specific challenges to the local marine ecosystem that we can try to address. We know that there are invasive species (which are often by-catch) that prey upon the local shellfish population that the local fishing industry depends upon. These invasive species are a vast untapped resource for eating. Just because there isn't an existing market for these species doesn't mean they aren't edible or can't be delicious; therefore, we have focused on creating a part of our menu that will involve the gathering and eating of invasive species now found in local Connecticut waters.

By collecting invasive seafood on shell-fishing beds, we are basically providing a free weeding service. We strive to be like the Musahar, the rat-catching people of India, who serve as an ecologically healthy, pesticide-free way of ridding farms of crop-destroying rodents. We hope that this will do a few things.

First of all, it could potentially curb the dominance of invasive species in the ecosystem. Secondly, it would provide the seafood industry a greater supply of native seafood, and reduce the stresses on those populations already fished. Finally, we hope that it would encourage greater balance in the inter-regenerative relationship between man and the oceans. If we were to have thirty Miya's in thirty different places, each one would have a slightly different menu, each reflecting the problems of its local universe.

Here is my recontextualized paraphrasing of something Jesus once said: It's easier for a camel to appreciate good food than an educated man with a sophisticated palate. There's something about "culture" that tends to blind us. There's a part of me that knows that I have to approach food in the way that a creature much less cultured and more innocent than I would; that is to say, oftentimes it is essential to approach food with naiveté, and without expectations or judgment. I find that this approach is especially important when I am working with, or even eating foods that I am not accustomed to.

Asian Stalked Tunicate, also known by a the delicious sounding name of Sea Squirt, has taken over what used to be Blue Mussel habitat from Maine to New Jersey. The alien Sea Squirt, which is indigenous to the Philippines, is considered a fouling organism and a pest by the shellfishing industry. In Korea, however, it is considered a delicacy and an aphrodisiac. The first time I ate Sea Squirt, it was prepared for me at a Korean sushi bar in the city. The scrotum-like squirts were arranged like a sunflower in the middle of a bright orange plate. As I bit into a sack, it burst with salty, viscous, warm liquid. Though I couldn't see the liquid, I could taste that it's color was yellow like phlegm; and, it took all of my will power to keep it in my mouth and a bit more effort to swallow it. I was not turned on.

Yancy said to me once, that Buckminster Fuller recommended that one should dare to be naive. I think it takes a bit of his approach to truly accept new ways of doing things, and this includes eating, of course. The next time I tried Sea Squirt, I scraped one off of a pier. I sliced open its tough outer membrane, which revealed a soft orange flesh, like mango. With barely a pause, I slurped it into my mouth, off of the palm of my hand. Again, I was not turned on, but this time, it was good.

In order to create the following menu (on pages 25, 26 & 27), I asked myself "what if we were to eat the invasive, highly successful predators of our local ecosystem?" Over the years, I have foraged, fished and hunted lots of different plants and animals; the following are recipes I have created from the invasive ones.

Special thanks to all of the biologists at the DEP and NOAA, in particular, Kristin DeRosia Banick and Walter Blogoslawski.

long island sound invasive species menu:

stone soup

european flat oyster & algae covered rock simmered in a clear sake chicken broth flavored with queen anne's lace root, wild onions & native morels. served in a large iron pot & designed to be shared by a small village/00.00/priceless - free for very special community gatherings

nine spice lion19.5

lionfish is a voracious, highly poisonous, invasive predator that have been compared to locust in their destructiveness. this fish is believed to have been introduced when six escaped from a broken home aquarium florida in 1992 during hurricane andrew. protected by highly toxic hypodermic spines & resembling seaweed, lionfish have no natural enemies. served raw & thin sliced with crushed sechuan peppers, roasted seaweed flakes, toasted sesame seeds & fresh chives in our citrusy chinese firecracker sake soy/13.75

the wild swan & kudzu roll

native to europe & asia; this bird was introduced to the united states as an ornamental species; first appeared on long island sound in the 1920's. mute swans damage marshes & shallow water habitats by tearing up vegetation. kudzu, known as the mile a minute plant for how quickly it grows, is in the pea family and was introduced by gardeners to the united states in the 1930's; it is native to china & japan. it creates a canopy & suffocates native forests. pulled barbeque swan in a steamed kudzu leaf roll stuffed with sticky rice & chopped wild mushrooms. *because kudzu contains oxalic acid, people with kidney problems should not eat it/13.75

sargasso chips

red algae came over on the ballast of ships, competes with native species, & crowds out sunlight. seasoned with olive oil, spicy native honey, lemon salt & sesame seeds then perfectly baked into crispy chips/6.75

wa fu crab soup

european green crabs are an invasive species that were introduced to the united states in the 1890's. they are voracious eaters that eat the larvae of commercial shellfish species. beer boiled in ethipian berbere spice & shallots then served as a soup with homemade crab picks made from homegrown bamboo. these crabs are fun to pick at & tasty as any crab you will ever have - like periwinkles, green crabs are a delicacy and do not contain a lot of meat/13.75

new england stalked tunicate miso

the asian stalked tunicate has taken over much of the native blue mussel habitat. an interesting fact: a drug derived from sea squirts shows potent anti-cancer effects. this recipe uses asian stalked tunicate in a coconut cream, oak barrel aged miso whiskey miso chowder/4.75

pollo frito shore crabs

invasive species of crab that came over on the ballasts of ships in the 1980's & competes with other shellfish. in a fried chicken flavored batter basket/8.75

naughty norwegian

moon snails are considered pests by local fisherman & are a bycatch of lobstering. they are carnivores that feed on other shellfish by boring holes into their shells. they are considered a delicacy & a natural viagra in norway. grilled with lime juice & a splash of chinese firecracker sake soy 2 pieces/8.75

rip van periwinkle

the common periwinkle is one of the most dominant inter-tidal omnivores. it came from europe in the 1870's. simmered with lots of garlic, ginger & salted chinese black bean/8.75

european flat oyster on the half shell

the european flat oyster was deliberately introduced to maine in the 1940's & competes with native shellfish. served on the half shell with a spicy citrus daikon relish/0.75 each

aphrolingus consomme

bishop's orchard apple wine is the canvas for our pureed white bean bouillaibase that features fresh local seafood which is the bycatch (starfish, snails, crabs, periwinkles) of commercial fishing. this hearty soup is made from invasive predatory species/3.75

japanese knotweed sushi roll

japanese knotweed is originally from eastern asia & presently thriving in 39 states. listed as one of the world's 100 worst invasive species by the world covservation union. grows quikly in clusters & crowds out other herbaceous species. crunchy, juicy & tart not unlike a granny smith apple; one of the best natural sources of resveratrol which has been shown to have anti-cancer, anti-inflammatory & blood-sugar-lowering benefits; served, freshly blanched, in a whole grain roll *contains oxalic acid; people with kidney problems should not eat it/3.75

*the inedible remains of this menu are used to make a rich compost for our gardens, inspired by the way native american fishing tribes would bury fish as fertilizer for their corn, squash & bean crops

Kwasabu mwanadamu hawezi kula ubwabwa tu

בגלל שבן-אדם לא יכול לחיות על אורז בלבד

No sólo de arroz vive el hombre

لأن الرجل لع يستطيع العيش على الأرز فقظ

Puisque l'homme ne peut pas vivre que du riz seulement

क्योंकि कोई व्यक्ति सिर्फ़ चावल पर ही तो नहीं जी सकता

No ka mea ʻaʻole hiki iā kānaka ke ola ma o ka laiki wale nō.

По тому что человек не сможет выжить на рисе одном

人不能光靠白米過活兒

人は米だけでは生きられない

Because man cannot live on rice alone

Omdat op rijst alleen een mens niet leven kan

인간이란 쌀만 먹고 살수 없으니까

Dahil ang tao ay hindi maaaring mabuhay sa bigas nag-iisa

Perché l'uomo non può sopravvivere solamente con riso

Därför att man inte kan leva på endast ris

Ponieważ ludzie nie mogą żyć tylko na ryżu

Omdat mense nie op rys alleen kan lewe nie

Επειδή ο άνθρωπος δεν μπορεί να ζήσει με ρύζι μόνο

Vorovhedev, mart meayn printsov chabrir

Vì người sống chẳng phải chỉ nhờ cơm mà thôi

CHAPTER 1

There Were No Crumbs Left

The other night I had dinner with one of my heroes, French presidential candidate, Jose Bove. Bove is the French Roquefort cheese farmer turned anti-globalization activist who initially became world famous for driving a tractor through a McDonald's in Millau in 1999.

One of the many reasons I love French culture is that the French are tremendous romantics. France is one of the few places where one can drive a tractor through a McDonald's one day and run for president the next. In this year's French presidential election he said that he is running for the people without a voice.

Bove has supported the causes of small French organic farmers, Tahitians, Palestinians, Kanaks and indigenous Melanesians. I may not agree with all of his politics but I have to respect a person who puts the little people and the environment before big business and profit.

Famed anthropologist David Graber brought him in for dinner. Bove was one of the easiest customers I have ever had to please. He insisted on nothing and enjoyed the food, the drink, and the camaraderie in the proper French fashion. From his notorious media image, I expected a defiant political rebel, and instead found his easy-going enthusiasm refreshing. Though he is a staunch defender of traditional food cultures and my cuisine can easily represent the type of cultural homogenization that America has pioneered, he enjoyed it nonetheless.

Out of respect for Bove, many of the ingredients that I used to make his dinner was locally grown. Of course, all of the recipes were mine with the usual mixture of international influences. I created a central course of mini Big Macs with tuna sashimi to commemorate his drive through McDonald's, which garnered the laughs that I was hoping for.

Towards the end of dinner, we smoked Connecticut tobacco in our pipes and drank lots of locally picked sassafras sake that I brewed for the occasion. As the table was finally cleared, I noticed that there were no Big Macs left, and not even a crumb on Bove's plate.

CHAPTER 2

I Know Why Scientists Carry Pens In Their Front Pockets

Tonight, I feel like a kid at his birthday party to be doing fifty-five Kaiseki dinners. An in-depth explanation of what I've created is central to the Kaiseki dinner experience at Miya's; each creation has an illuminating story which takes hours, cumulatively, to present. Each story allows the diner to appreciate the dish from my own unique perspective - as the inventor. The socio-historical significance of many of my dishes are often as important as their gustatory value.

Tonight's Kaiseki dinner adventurers are a group of scientist's from all around the world. I have a special affinity towards scientist because my father 's passion has always been research. My dad has always carried around a pad and pens in his front pocket like the stereotypical mad scientist that you see in the movies. I know why scientists do that because I asked him one day when I was a small boy.

"Bun, I never know when I'll get a good idea and when I do I have a pen and pad ready so that I can write it down. In fact, I even have a pen and pad next to my bed because sometimes good ideas come to me in my sleep."

Years later, I read a book called "The Committee Of Sleep" which discusses how dreams can be used to feed one's creativity or to solve problems. I spent most of my academic career sleeping, so this book made perfect sense to me, in bed.

This morning, when I sprang up, ideas that I had literally dreamt up for the Kaiseki party were still darting around my head like so many guppies. One idea that I felt particularly excited about was for the final course. I scribbled it down, half asleep, on the pad next to my bed.

A couple months ago, I'd fermented an experimental batch of lactose sugar sake. My brilliant idea was to warm it up and serve it in baby bottles so that each guest could feel nurtured like a...baby.

Not all the ideas that end up scribbled down on my pad are good ones. I'm sure that's the way it went for my dad too.

CHAPTER 3

How To Properly French Kiss

The only way to truly French Kiss is to kiss a French person. "French lips are softer and warmer than the lips of people of any of other nationality" (April 2007 issue of *Nature*.)[316] That's the reason nobody ever "American Kisses" or "Chinese Kisses." (The only people who don't French Kiss are the Eskimo as they have their own way of low temperature kissing). Everyone else aspires to "French Kissing." From Afghanistan to Zimbabwe, everybody French Kisses!

My newest dish, **The Softest French Kisses**, which can be found on page 8 of the menu, has captured much of the sensual pleasures of French Kissing; it is warm and it makes you want to gently draw it in to your mouth with your tongue.

For those of you who have never French Kissed, **The Softest French Kisses** will be almost as good an introduction to French Kissing as the real thing. It is a warm sashimi of scallops in a light oyster sauce. Sashimi is traditionally served cold. I wanted to create a warm sashimi which would be served without the traditional soy sauce; I wanted the actual plate, the scallops and the sauce to be warm upon serving. This would be the perfect cold weather sashimi.

To accompany the scallops, I chose to make a sake based ginger garlic oyster sauce. In the original recipe, I slowly simmered freshly shucked oysters (that I had collected at Stony Creek in the Town of Brandford) in homemade sake with ginger and garlic until the rice sugars started to carmelize and create a gorgeous translucent amber sauce. After straining out the ingredients through a cheese cloth, I added a tiny bit of arrowroot starch and sake to thicken the remaining sauce.

The recommended method of eating this dish is to slowly and sensusally rub a warm slice of scallop once around your puckered lips and then, in the final moment, to suck it into your mouth with a popping sound. This popping sound is one that is considered excellent etiquette at the French dinner table just as the slurping sound is to the Chinese.

CHAPTER 4

Gathering Dinner At Teaswood Pond

Today I went to gather dinner ingredients at Teaswood pond in Conroe, Texas. I caught stonefly larvae, dragonfly larvae, baby crayfish, snails and tiny translucent freshwater shrimp by dragging a butterfly net through clusters of curled pondweed and grass.

The snails were abundant but tiny, like pebbles. Boiled and dipped in a roasted sesame black bean sauce, it was as good as the best escargot. The baby crayfish fried whole were like soft-shelled crab. I also fried the dragonfly and stonefly larvae. I used a standard vegetable oil to fry the larvae with, so that I could better taste what I was eating. I seasoned them with salt and they were crispy and sweet and went well with the crayfish. The shrimp tasted like their cousins from the ocean. I also dug up little freshwater clams in the sand but they didn't taste like much (I made a simple broth, so not to interfere with the clam's natural flavor), true to their reputation.

I dug up the root of a thorny thistle plant and simmered it in sake, soy, mirin and a dried chili pepper and it was deee-licious. A few days earlier, I had found a branch covered with dry green lichen. I had soaked it in water and changed the water about a dozen times over three days. I made sure to separate the lichen from bits of bark and grit. Sauteed with garlic, extra-virgin olive oil and a little salt it tasted like the mongrel child of seaweed and oyster mushrooms, taking the best characteristics from both parents.

My gals, Meredith and Mary Margaret, tried everything that I had collected. In fact, by the time I was done cooking, there was barely any left for me. This flattered the heck out of me! Most Texans don't eat bugs nowadays, so I do believe that these cowgirls were brave epicures.

CHAPTER 5

Far From The Maddening Crowd

My mother showed me how to collect wild burdock when I was nine and I would bring home long roots of it, as a gift for her. I started reading around the same time and fell in love with "My Side Of The Mountain," "The Cay," "A Light In The Forest" and "The Yearling" - all children's books that have the protagonists separated from modern life and living in tune with nature. Since I spent much of my youth playing out in the woods, to this day I consider myself a country boy more than anything else.

In 2004, Dr. Wangari Maathai won the Nobel Peace Prize. Her African woman's movement is responsible for planting tens of millions of trees, to counter-act deforestation in Africa. She brings to attention the vital connection between environmental destruction, poverty and war. She recalled a special tree that her mother told her, as a child, never to hurt because it was connected to God. Those trees were being razed. Many indigenous cultures, especially the animistic ones, see God everywhere in nature. It makes perfect sense to me.

Perhaps, if we know how to eat from nature, which most of us do not know how to do anymore, we would appreciate it as something that nourishes our souls and we'd want to protect it more like Wangari Maathai is doing.

In many religions food and eating has religious significance. Christians have the Eucharist where bread and wine is eaten as the symbol of the body of Christ; Muslims have Ramadan and Jews have Yom Kippur where fasting brings them closer to God; in Asian Ancestor worship food is brought to the shrine to feed the souls of their departed loved ones. Foraging to me is like prayer. It helps bring me closer to nature, and nature always makes me feel closer to God, when I am away, far from the maddening crowd.

CHAPTER 6
Artichokes And Apples

The television show "The Little Rascals" started my long relationship with artichokes. I didn't grow up eating them, because Asians just don't eat them. On one of the episodes of the show, Alfalfa is shown diligently peeling open an artichoke, leaf by leaf, and is surprised to find inside...an apple!

Later, grocery shopping with my mother, I spotted an artichoke and shamelessly begged for it. I wasn't a kid who begged much but this was a big deal to me. I didn't just want it. I needed it.

"Bun, do you really know what that is?"

She stopped the carriage as I reached out towards the artichoke. I kicked my feet a little and tried to pull myself out of the carriage seat to emphasize my point.

"Mom, trust meeee, I know how to eat it!" I pleaded.

The walk home from the grocery store felt like a lifetime. Finally, we sat at the speckled linoleum kitchen table that my mother had let me pick out at a tag sale, just a week earlier. My mother patiently watched as I confidently peeled it open, leaf by leaf, just like on the show but slower and with more anticipation. I eventually peeled my way to the prickly, furry center. What? Had the apple not yet developed? Closely inspected, there was no sign of even a crab apple inside. A dud! I need another one!

Artichokes are one of my favorite vegetables nowadays. I'll have it for lunch in a sandwich, as a side during dinner or as a healthier and funner alternative to popcorn when I'm watching a movie.

Over many years at Miya's, I have chopped apart thousands of pounds of artichokes to be rolled into sushi and to be served steamed with a side of my six month aged hot and frothy jalapeño dip. Why am I so into this vegetable? I can't help but wonder...is little me still searching for that apple?

*Our **jalapeño sauce**, which is served with our **Sweet Mother's Milk** and **The Kung Fu Tuna**, is made from homegrown jalapeños that have been pickled. The pickling method used is a middle eastern process that causes the steamed, salted jalapeños to slowly pickle in their own juices in a vat of olive oil for six months. The result is a pickle that is dramatically milder than vegetables that have been pickled in a vinegar solution. I got the inspiration to pickle jalapeños in this way because I fell in love with the pickled eggplant, called makdoos, at Mamoun's Falafel Restaurant.

CHAPTER 7
The Importance Of Peanut Butter

In fifth grade at an exclusive elementary school in New Haven, Norberto Ortiz, one of my best friends, delivered a breath of fresh air. In a school where little alligators on our tennis shirts expressed our solidarity, his choice of fashion stood out like a totem pole. That year, his jacket of choice, that even the hottest days of summer would not convince him to take off, was a shiny red plastic Michael Jackson one; the same one that M.J. wore in his "Beat It" video. His lunchbox was of the same design as his jacket; it glistened, big, red, and plastic with a semblance of the singer, pushing out of the center like he was trying to escape. Norberto's lunchbox contained an ever-changing menagerie of food treasures that my mother was oblivious to the existence of: Twinkies, Oreos10, Cheese Doodles, Fritos, Doritos, Pringles, Ruffles, Ding Dongs, Fruit Roll-Ups, Goldfish, Cracker Jacks with the little prize in the box, every good food that this ten year old could ever desire. My lunches were a source of constant internal struggle for me and I felt that I was at war with my clueless mother who made them. I didn't expect some sort of utopian lunch that Norberto had. All that I wanted was the type of lunch that everybody else had; peanut butter and jelly or a ham sandwich; perhaps an apple to go with it; that simple; and maybe some Kool-Aid too. What I got for lunch was quite different; little rice balls filled with cooked fish; a bento box of chicken and vegetable fried rice with a pickled plum; a sandwich with eggs and vegetables; sushi – holy crap, no!

By lunchtime starvation was setting in so I had to eat my lunch, as much as I despised it for being different. It made me furious that something that I hated so passionately tasted so delicious.

"Please," I would think to myself, "I hope nobody sees me eating my lunch because I know people are gonna think I'm weird."

"Mom, I only eat peanut butter sandwiches at school, okay?"

Dr. Phuey had streaks of white in his helmet of jet black hair. He was a French Vietnamese scientist who lived next door with his French wife, Teresa, who was a good friend of my mother's.

(continued on page 36)

The Importance Of Peanut Butter Continued...

"An Asian with a French accent, what a curious thing," I thought to myself, not thinking that it was at all odd that my parents spoke English with a Chinese and Japanese accent.

Dr. Phuey and I were in West Haven again, on a rock pier, fishing for whatever would come our way. We loved fishing but we rarely caught anything; this had more to do with our lack of knowledge as fishermen, I suspect, than the lack of fish along the coast.

Usually, after a few hours of catching seaweed and driftwood (while everyone around us were pulling up whales, practically), Dr. Phuey would unwrap his favorite sandwiches that he had prepared especially for us. I'd always eat it, smiling gratefully at Dr. Phuey as if to say "this is really yummy" while trying hard to enjoy it but never quite succeeding to. What made Dr. Phuey's sandwich so unusual was that it was an English muffin stuffed with ham and...PEANUT BUTTER!

As I was eating a rice ball during lunchtime the next day at school, I was grateful that my mother didn't pack me a Dr. Phuey special instead. If she had, I think I would have died, at the tender age of ten, from disgust and embarrassment.

When I have children I hope to teach them to appreciate the unusual. I hope they appreciate the uniqueness in themselves and others; above all, I hope that they learn to appreciate peanut butter and ham sandwiches.

Sometimes, I have the opportunity to invite New Haven public school children, specifically the ones who are from more challenging circumstances than mine, to my restaurant. These children don't usually have exposure to a restaurant like mine; one that doesn't serve pizza or burgers. Every time I have kids over, at first, the children are reluctant to try what we cook for them, then they topple into acceptance, one by one like dominos. We all need to be inspired to try something new sometimes.

There are endless possibilities for food, as there are for our lives, if we would only make the effort to look around and change our perspective.

Once in a while, when I'm thinking that things are tough; or when I'm letting myself fall into some kind of complacency; and when it's best to prod myself into adjusting my world-view, so that I can be inspired again to keep marching in the right direction; I go to my restaurant and savor a sushi roll; the one with the peanut butter in it.

If The Japanese Believed In Guardian Angels

At Miya's in 1983, David Hayden spun out endless steaming plates of tuna teriyaki from the tiniest kitchen in town.

When I was nine, David took me camping to Canada. I went fishing and made sunfish soup. When one of the other kids poured too much salt in it - upsetting me, David fixed it by adding potato. Later, I glowed as the adults complimented me on my soup, as they navigated through the piles of bones and scales and eyeballs floating in it.

When I was fourteen, David and I wrestled on the carpet of Miya's. David got a bump on his head. "Davuuuuuuuu!" I heard my mom reprimand. "...but it is common sensu!" I chuckled but David felt bad whenever my mother was upset. He was her protector and if the Japanese believed in guardian angels, David was my mother's.

David retired from Miya's to take care of his mother and passed away shortly after she did. At the end of his life, my mother and I and a great man named Bill Fischer were among the only few people he wanted to see.

At home, my mother has a traditional Japanese ancestoral shrine where she prays. The ashes of my grand parents are kept there. Some of David's are too.

Recently, I found a letter that was written to my mom in 1993 by David. He had worked at Miya's for over a decade at that point.

Dear Yoshiko,

I want to thank you for caring about people, for caring about their health and growth as human beings first. You never did anything just for profit or for fear of losing money. You set an example by your faith: with the courage to hold onto right principles no matter what the cost. Someone can be a good person and a good businessperson. Thank you for your patience and strength. I will not forget them.

With special regards - David Hayden

footnotes:

1**Kanibaba** (the vegetable version is the **Chinese Pygmy Rodeo**; the shrimp version is the **Ebibaba**; the salmon version is the **Rabibaba**) is one of our most dificult roll to make. It takes about forty minutes to complete one. It is a hand carved potato, infused with salmon head soup stock, wrapped around a jumbo soft-shelled crab, with torch toasted havarti cheese and lemon dill sauce on top. It is topped with dime-sized fried Asian shore crabs. These crabs are caught by licensed Connecticut fisherman. Asian shore crabs migrated on the ballasts of ships in the 1980's. They are aggressive predators and disliked by fisherman for eating up the larvae of shellfish. There are no known recipes that exist that use these foreign invaders. The dish is sculpted to look like crabs crawling on rocks during low tide on one of many of Connecticut's craggy sea shores. Sip **Ultra Violet Kisses**17 while you stare at it and you can truly believe that you are the sea.

2Recently catfish wiggled its way into my menu. Historically, when sushi cuisine used freshwater fish such as carp (narezushi), it is not outlandish to surmise that catfish may have also been used. When you think of it that way, suddenly, it's not that strange that you're eating catfish sushi. My most basic catfish sushi is named the **Catfish Blues**. Its recipe is simple and good in the way a catfish po' boy is. **The Greatest Sushi South Of The Mason-Dixon** (the vegetable version is the **Apple Bottom Sushi**) is my way of tipping my hat to the South's greatest shared creation: Soul Food. This sushi recipe is especially time consuming to prepare but the ingredients are decidedly unglamorous...true to good old fashioned Southern cooking. I use grits, fried catfish (marinated overnight in lots of spice and garlic) and okra and lots of Cheddar cheese and hot hot spices which results in perhaps the heartiest roll in the history of sushi...or at least in the history of Miya's Sushi. I use grits in lieu of rice because there's nothing more American than corn and this is sushi that could have only been born here in America. My recipe for grits is inspired by Mary Margaret's famous cheese grits, one of my favorite things to eat while I'm in Texas...or anywhere else for that matter. I chose not to use a more sophisticated cheese than cheddar because there is no cheese that says working class American more than bright yellow Cheddar. If you were to replace the Cheddar in macaroni and cheese it would no longer be that wonderful dish of our youth. Similarly, if I were to put Camembert in this roll or steamed it instead of frying it in cornmeal...it simply would be robbed of it's Southern Soul. It is safe to say that Fats Domino probably didn't like sushi but I imagine that he would have loved the Apple Bottom Sushi with some cornbread and some black eyed peas!

2.5"Your **tempura is brown** and burnt up!" he huffed. My Mexicans can't make tempura!? They can, and our tempura is brown because we use our own vegan whole wheat recipe, okay?

footnotes:

3**The Devil's Black Fish Sampler** tips its hat to Cajun cooking. I sear tuna, salmon and black marlin in Korean processed chili pepper called Kokucharu. Kokucharu is used to make Kimchee. By searing the fish in super high heat (with the pepper pressed onto the surface of the fish) the fish stays raw in the center while it cooks and burns on the outside. I love the contrast between flavors, textures and temperatures that are created by the searing.

4**Tea Leaf Aloha**: The Chinese use black tea to cook poultry. My goal for this recipe was to use Japanese green tea to cook fish instead. The result is a parched earth tasting green tea flavored Black Marlin.

5**Tyger Tyger** (the vegetable version of this is the **JapAfrican Queen**): In his poem, "*Tyger, Tyger*," William Blake asks the question "why are things the way that they are?" With this roll, I ask the question why did sushi have to come from Asia? With the Tyger Tyger I imagined that sushi originated in Africa, where geneticists have discovered that man originated. Many scholars believe that the land of Sheba, which was one of the ancient spice trading routes of the world, might have existed where Ethiopia is today. Tyger, Tyger is a roll of tempura tilapia (tilapia are indigenous to the lakes and rivers of the African rift valley) and goat cheese (Ethiopians are lovers of meat and until recently didn't eat much seafood). It contains a dozen spices (collectively called berbere) some of which originated in the modern Eritrean and Ethiopian coastal region of Africa. Axumite Legend, the Old Testament and the Torah describe a time in history when the Queen of Sheba visited King Solomon and gave him a gift of spices around 1000 BC. For this roll, insteadof rice, I used Teff (which is a highly nutritious Ethiopian grass grain) to make a crepe. This roll should not be dipped in soy sauce.

6**The Two Fish Cha Cha** is seared black marlin that has been line caught in the tropical and sub-tropical Indo-Pacific oceans. It is in the family of swordfish and is a true giant that can weigh up to 1200 pounds. When people ask for Toro, which is Bluefin Tuna belly fat, I offer them Black Marlin instead which is every bit as buttery but not over-fished. In this recipe dehydrated bits of Bonito Tuna and coarse kosher salt are pressed onto the fish, so one type of fish becomes the central seasoning for another.

7**The Nine Spice Sashimi** was my most popular red snapper dish. I replaced the snapper with tilapia when I learned that red snapper was over-fished. Funny thing is, tilapia shines through in this recipe far better than the snapper ever did. Tilapia, by the way, is the wold's original aquaculture fish. Hieroglyphics show tilapia being pond raised. Tradition, also, holds that tilapia was the fish Jesus used to feed five thousand on the Sea Of Galilee.

footnotes:

8**Sakura Sashimi** is tilapia sashimi that has been marinated in fresh beet pulp to give it a earthiness and a sweetness. It is served thinly sliced and frozen, seasoned with coarse sea salt and a squeeze of lime. As a kid I became fascinated by Inuits; maybe because of our striking resemblance and love for raw fish. When I saw them on National Geographic TV I always wished I could be there too, nibbling on the little frozen fish piled next to their ice hole. Eating frozen raw fish the way Inuits do in the wintertime became the inspiration for this dish. This dish should be served along with **The Softest French Kisses**, to contrast the sashimi styles. This should not be dipped in soy sauce.

9**The secret to our sushi rice**: All of my sushi is multi-grain, as it contains quinoa, oat groats and brown rice. I love whole grains because you really feel like your chewing on something substantial. I also love that it's good for you. Quinoa, for example, is a complete protein; it contains all the essential amino acids needed to sustain life. Whole grain oats, on the other hand, are believed to help lower high blood pressure. In a bunch of my rolls I also add , wild rice, amaranth and millet. Since most of my sushi involves large flavors, the hearty grain mixtures carry the recipes in a way that traditional sushi rice alone could not. Historically, vinegar was added to sushi rice as a way to preserve fish at a time when there was no refrigeration. Sugar is a recent ubiquitious addition to sushi rice and is a cheap way of making it taste good. Discarding the traditional sushi rice recipe makes good sense to me.

10**Wabisabi Salmon** (the vegetarian version is Warm Grapes Falling On A Happy Head): In Tanizaki's book, *In Praise Of Shadows*, he talks about going into the woods, picking persimmon leaves and using them to make wonderfully delicious salmon sushi rolls that he ate all summer long. Inspired by this recipe, but unable to find persimmon leaves, last summer I used wild grape leaves instead to make my own seaweed-free salmon roll. In my recipe, the grape leaves are simmered in a vegetable broth then stuffed with seared arctic char, flying fish caviar & avocado. For a final Mediterranean twist, I drizzle the roll in extra virgin olive oil. Wabisabi is a word coined by Tanizaki which describes the appreciation for the beauty of something that ages naturally; like antique furniture or the wrinkled face of the one you love are all Wabisabi.

11**The Bad Tempered Geisha Boy** uses rope-grown mussels as the central ingredient. I wanted to use mussels in my sushi because as filter feeders, mussels naturally clean ocean water (rather than pollute their environment like most farmed animals do). They also do not need to be grazed or fed grain (mainly soybean) like all other farmed animals. The Bad Tempered Geisha Boy roll reminds me of fried clams, which are one of my favorite New England specialties.

footnotes:

12**The Squiggly Giggly Roll**: This roll integrates very traditional Japanese flavors of ume, shiso and bonito with the unusual texture of squid. It should be served with the **Black Eyed Squid** because, though the central ingredients are the same the rolls couldn't be more different. Neither of these rolls should be dipped in soy sauce.

13**The Oaxacan Dragon**: I'm crazy about Mexican food and culture because I regularly raid the fridge at Chef Pablo's and Juan's house while watching our favorite soap opera, *Maria la del Barrio*. Over the years I've become crazy about mole and the Oaxacan Dragon is inspired by Mexican mole poblano. Chef Juan's mother sends him homemade batches of mole from Mexico and Chef Anisseto cooks it up in our kitchen, often served with tender boiled chicken wings. Mexican cuisine is the most complicated of all of the cuisines in Latin America and mole is a good example of this. Mole, more often than not, contains pepper, fruit and a cacao base. Its recipes vary vastly from one region to the other, from family to family. For the Oaxacan Dragon, I wanted to use a central ingredient as delicate as Anisetto's boiled chicken skin, so I chose eel. I drape tender fresh water **eel on a shrimp roll seasoned with my own recipe of mole made from crushed cookies, bananas, strawberries, chocolate, pumpkin seeds, raisins, ancho chiles and a bunch of other ingredients. Cookies are often used in traditional recipes for mole. There are very few cookies more American than Oreos and since we've all grown up with them I wanted to incorporate this American Icon into my recipe. Oreos and soy sauce do not mix. ** This recipe no longer uses eel as it is not sustainable.

14There's a lot more to the crunchiness in the **Best Crunchy Roll Ever** meets the eye. Shiitake mushroom flavored tempura batter is tossed with dried chili pepper, Rosemary, flaked seaweed and Iranian ghormeh sabzi which contains leek, parsley, spinach, fenugreek and coriander. Deep water escolar is tossed with a roasted sesame oil that is infused with chili pepper, black pepper and garlic. I debated if I should use escolar as it naturally contains wax esters that can cause strange, but harmless, bowel movements when consumed in quantity.

15**Happy Together**: In this recipe my goal was to have very different but related species of fish compliment each other. Yellow fin tuna is light and lean while Boston mackerel is full-flavored(fishy) and oily. In this roll, you will find that you will taste the ingredients in stages; the powerful mackerel first, followed by the clean sweetness of the tuna then the aromatic shiso that finally lingers, cleansing your palate. This roll would not work without the shiso used to bind the flavors. And in case you were wondering, I grow the shiso myself.

footnotes:

16**Black Eyed Squid**: When I was a teenager backpacking in Spain I ate a squid dish that sparked an epiphany. It was served with a spicy and aromatic black rice paella. This is my sushi homage to this wonderful memory. Like the paella, Black Eyed Squid is best served with a wedge of lemon or lime. Black Eyed Squid is made from rice cooked in seafood stock then tossed with imported Spanish squid ink. Inside the roll are fried squid with scallions, salted Chinese black beans and hot pepper. As a stark contrast, the **Squiggly Giggly** roll should be served with the Black Eyed Squid. These rolls should not be dipped in soy sauce.

17P**assion Without Words (Ride The Wild Donkey** is the seafood version with shrimp): It is believed that brie cheese was the favorite cheese of King Charlemagne, the father of Europe. But more significant to my creation is my own childhood brie addiction. My goal for this roll was to simply use brie as the central ingredient. The above rolls are a couple of my all time favorites where the brie is an essential and irreplaceable component of the recipe.

18**The Chinese Firecracker Sake**: Firecracker lovers drink it out of snifter glasses, sipping it slowly, savoring its honey citrus fire. It's, also the best sake to sake bomb with. It turns beer into a citrusy spicy cocktail. It is full of vitamin C and the chili pepper causes your stomach to secrete enzymes that help protect it from the ravages of cigarettes and junk food. It also promotes a feeling of euphoria since the capsicum (chemical that makes peppers spicy) in it causes your body to produce endorphins (active component of a "runner's high"). The Chinese firecracker sake is aged from six months to a year, depending on how long the batch takes to fully mature.

19**Emerald Witches' Lips**: It's made from the needles and cones of Norway Spruce, White Pine or Hemlock, (not what Socrates used to kill himself – which is in the carrot family). The pine sake is citrusy, because pine contains more vitamin C than citrus fruit. Native Americans used to eat the inner bark of pine during winter famine because it is so nutritive. It was also used to treat scurvy (vitamin C deficiency during the turn of the nineteenth century.) Imagine taking a sip of lemonade while inhaling a deep breath of surrounding pine forest; that sums up the Emerald Witches' Lips experience. Every batch is different since it is affected by the individual tree, the seasons and myself.

19.5**Nine Spice Lion:** Years ago there was an article in the Times about how fugu (deadly pufferfish) consumption in Japan had dropped dramatically. People are bored with fugu, and want a new poisonous sushi fish. he destructive lionfish is a voracious invasive predator and should be part of every sushi menu.

20**Ultraviolet Kisses** is made with red basil from my garden and salted green plums. My cousin, Erichan, took me to a tea ceremony at a monastery in Japan where they served us salty ume tea. I couldn't believe my mouth so I tinkered with the concept of a salty beverage and evolved it into one of Pierre's and my favorite watch-the-sun-come-up sakes. I infuse autumn shiso into sake for most of the winter before adding ume and infusing it for at least another month.

21Kids love the **Cherokee Sumac Love Potion** because it tastes a lot like lemonade. I specifically use the furry staghorn sumac, roasting it for three hours in the oven to deepen its flavors similar to the technique of roasted coffee. Like all of the other wild plants that we use, we forage this from my friend's farm, in Ledyard. Native Americans would dry staghorn sumac to make a nutritious winter beverage. I feel a special affinity towards Native American culture, because after my people (mongols) crossed the Berring Strait from the Asian continent, during the Ice Age, we evolved into "American Indians." Though I didn't personally walk across the Berring Straight to get here (I took a plane), still, I feel like a brother to Sitting Bull.

22I was the cool acting Asian guy in a Carlsberg beer commercial that ran its course in Asia. I travelled to Asia that year but nobody seemed to notice that I was famous, except for me.

23**Seven Deadly Sushi**: is a roll of banana, peanut butter, blueberries & chocolate – deep fried and topped with baby scoops of rose petal ice cream that we make ourselves from organically grown rose petals. Ideally, it is eaten immediately in one bite, combining the hot, the cold and the different flavors simultaneously. If you think sushi styled desert is strange; think of rice pudding. The proof is in it. Heaven forbid you dip this dessert in soy sauce.

24My favorite thing to do when I was a kid was to create a new world out of crayon, clay or just about anything I could get my hands on. Not much has changed, except my medium these days is food and my technique is cooking. With my cooking I always strive to nourish the body, the mind and the soul. The other day, I read a touching memoir called "The Tender Bar" by J.R. Moehringer, about a bar and its regulars that tenderly raise a lost, fatherless child. I couldn't help but think that this is what we do for each other at Miya's. Not that we are lost or fatherless but that we have created a haven for people who care about each other. You can't do anything great without CARE...even when all else is done perfectly, when the food is served without this intangible ingredient - you can, actually, taste that it is missing.

My Favorite Burdock Root Recipe

Around the time that I was seven two very important things happened to me: my mother taught me how to dig up burdock root and I fell in love with a little novel about a white boy who was raised by Indians, called A light In The Forest. That spring, imagining that I was True Son (the main character in the novel), I spent long afternoons foraging my neighborhood for the best burdock roots I could find. Once, my friend Yoshiro and I were digging in a fenced in private field (where we were not supposed to be) when two wolf-like dogs raced after us and one of them feasted on my little nine year old tush as I was frantically scurrying over the fence. I screamed like a banshee as I tossed the burdock to safety to the other side of the fence. Later that night, lying on my stomach in bed and with a big Band-Aid covering my stitches, I savored the sweet root. It was so delicious that I couldn't help but think it was almost worth getting bitten for. The following is my mom's recipe. It's quite good but I can't guarantee, however, that you'll feel that it's worth a dog bite on your bum.

You can find burdock root almost anywhere and you usually don't have to fend off wild dogs to get to a patch. It tends to grow where people have allowed nature to take over fields and road-sides. Once you learn to identify it, you will literally see it everywhere. Since it is a biennial you can always find big thick roots that are perfect for eating.

If you are lucky and the soil is loose and sandy sometimes you can pull a two feet long burdock root right out of the soil by the stalks. But more often, you have to carefully dig around the root. After digging the root up, you have to thoroughly scrub its brown outer surface with a scouring pad. I find that a peeler takes off too much of the delicate edible surface.

Cut the burdock into as thin strips as you can. Cut into equally thin strips, half as much carrot as you have burdock. Boil both for burdock for fifteen minutes than toss out the water. Add new water and when it boils again toss in the carrot strips and boil for another five minutes than toss out the water again. Add a splash of roasted sesame oil, white cane sugar and soy sauce to taste and stirfry it until the liquid is totally evaporated. Cook on low to medium heat so you can take your time, adjusting the seasoning to how you would like it to taste. You want the roots to be sweet like sweet potato and to have the texture of undercooked pasta.

Nipponese Bar-B-Q Recipe

As spring time arrives, like all blue-blooded Asians, one of my favorite things to do is Bar-B-Q. Though professionally I am known as a sushi rodeo champ, at home I adored for my Bar-B-Q prowess. Since there is no culture of outdoor family Bar-B-Qing in Japan (and since there isn't a form of cooking more American than Bar-B-Q), lighting up my outdoor grill is the first thing that I do when family visits from abroad. This is an ultra easy, mega delicious Bar-B-Q with a Nipponese Twist.

This recipe works especially well on chicken thighs and legs. The marinade also works marvelously with large medallions of eggplant and squid!

Like most of what I do, I took the idea for this Bar-B-Q from my mom but claim that it's my own original recipe. I use organic freerange chicken because as the Yanomamo of the Amazon Rainforest say, "a happy chicken is a delicious chicken!"

A dozen or so chicken thighs and legs and/or three pounds of chopped vegetables or so
2 cups Japanese Soy Sauce (such as Kikkoman brand)
4 tablespoons roasted sesame oil
2 teaspoons black pepper
1 teaspoon crushed red pepper
Golf ball sized chunk of fresh Ginger
Ten cloves fresh Garlic
2 tablespoons sake or white wine
2 heaping tablespoon of tomato paste

Using an electric blender, puree all of the marinade ingredients for about ten seconds so that the ginger and garlic are finely chopped but not totally minced. If you end up totally mincing it, no big deal, the marinade will still be fan-tastic!

Massage the marinade into the chicken and vegetables and refrigerate in remaining marinade for approximately four hours prior to grilling.

Men & Women make different kind of Chefs

Bun, I wanted to take a moment to send you a message about our experience at your lovely restaurant. My mother, her boyfriend, and I came in for dinner late on Saturday night after they picked me up from a dreadfully late flight from Chicago.

Well, despite the late hour (and my overly hungry stomach), it was a lovely and memorable experience – perhaps even one of the highlights of my last trip to the Elm City. Yes, the food was very tasty and thoughtfully prepared but the pleasant experience was more holistic. Your menu items were unusual, creative, and above all fresh. In addition, the service was heartfelt. We left feeling like our spirits had been cared for and our bellies loved. We especially enjoyed talking to you and getting your personal recommendations.

After you left, your mother, Yoshiko, came over to the table and talked with us about the restaurant, her family, and her love for her family. She also shared some wonderful green tea with us, which she served from her special china. I found something she said especially profound and have been thinking about it ever since Saturday evening. She said that women and men make different kinds of chefs because of the way that they are socialized. Women are taught to cook on a budget, the stretch a given sum of money as far as it can go to feed many mouths. Whereas, men create from pure extravagance and desire. One sex is not necessarily better in the kitchen – just different. Naturally, I am paraphrasing her beautiful words, but it went something like this.

Given my exhaustion and hunger, I didn't pay much attention to the part of the menu apart from what I could devour. But mom picked up one of your menus to bring home and she read it cover to cover. For my first 24 hrs at home, she raved about your musings and said it was more of a life and passion philosophy than a menu. On Monday night, her boyfriend, Robert, who is a CIA-trained chef fixed the two of us an amazing dinner. And during dessert, mom pulled out your menu and recited excerpts as if she was reciting Yeats or Emerson. What lovely thoughts! And we all agreed that reading these enhanced our reminiscing of the evening at Miya's.

We are all very picky eaters and have been to multiple wonderful restaurants around the world – Jean George, Morimoto, Chez Panisse- but Miya's will certainly stick out as one of our most enjoyable and memorable spots. And how lucky that it is right in our backyard!

Dr. Jennifer Jordan,
Author, "Harnessing Power To Capture Leadership."
Kellogg School of Management - Ford Center for Global Citizenship

and More Food for Thought...

Bun, Great being with you last night, permitted to put the pedal to the floor. Of course there's much more.

I urge you to think more about that first act of Biblical eating. The fruit (not an apple) is described in Genesis Chapter 3 as "good for eating, a delight to the eyes, ...a desirable source of wisdom." The snake said to the woman, "You are not going to die but God knows that as soon as you eat of it your eyes will be opened, you will be like God, knowers of good and bad."

That food is eaten by the eyes, that the eyes make initial contact with the morsel, this of course you know better than I. But that in eating we seek wisdom and discrimination even as we fear or face dying, this is perhaps less familiar a way to think about ingesting. In eating we seek to become like God. Through eating we discover our naked humanity and simultaneously our link to deity.

This last observation is captured I think in the Hebrew blessing mandated by the Talmud to be recited AFTER eating virtually anything, beginning with a glass of water or any juice, save grape juice or wine. "You are the Source of Blessing, Creator of myriad souls and of their neediness that weighs upon all that You created in order to revive through them the soul of each life." A little ponderous but thus it is, more or less. Eating allows an experience of resurrection, of near-death and rebirth.

In eating we meet God and lose God, eat God, as it were, become God (as in "You are what you eat.") and lose God (as in "You can't eat your cake and have it too.") In eating we become naked babes, nursling, sucking at the breast of life. Babes are innocent but in adult eating there is always a dimension of the forbidden, a guilt that we must destroy, kill, mash, sunder, mutilate in order to survive. The guilt over eating precedes the guilt over sex, but it is the same guilt. It is the belief that we are not lovers but rather greedy, hungry murderers.

The Talmud, by the way, reckons that different foods require different blessings. Both before and after eating. This category of law may be worth pursuing further. Thus before a glass of water one says, "You are the Source of blessing through whose word everything comes to be." Eating then is like speaking. The miracle of mouth, organ of ingestion, kissing, biting, eating and speaking. We speak light and we eat light.

Rabbi James E. Ponet
Howard M. Holtzmann Jewish Chaplain
Joseph Slifka Center for Jewish life at Yale

Goethe, if he ever dinned at Miya's

Dear Bun,

I would like to thank you for the magical evening. We have had so many together, but paradoxically, each seems to be unique and special. Upon reflection, this is the magic of a night at Miya's with Bun presiding as sorcerer.

Goethe once wrote that " one ought, every day at least, to hear a little song, read a good poem, see a fine picture, and if it were possible to speak a few reasonable words." Though I feel some trepidation in amending such fine words from such a supremely perceptive man, I dare say that Goethe, if he ever dined at Miya's, would have included "to eat a lovely meal, and pass time with a beautiful soul," to his requisites for a good day.

Not many bring such goodness into the world for others to experience and take into their lives. It is the combination of a rare gift and creative energy. You should know this.

Yancy Orr
Department of Anthropology, University of Arizona

Supernatural Bull$#!*ing Powers

Bun,

Hey--you run an amazing place! You know I'm a 100% straight shooter, so you can count on it when I tell you that the VERY worst thing I can say about tonight is that I wouldn't have served the catfish last, and I had to beat my brains to come up with even that. Every single dish was fantastic. I'd be at a loss to tell anyone what to order. My advice to friends (and I will direct as many of them as I can your way) will simply be to put themselves in the hands of the great chef.

It was wonderful to see you in person, and even better to see you working in a business where you can put your supernatural bullshitting powers to work for you. When I get back to LA, I'll break out the pencil and paper and make you something suitable for framing.

Jay Lender
Writer/Director, Sponge Bob Square Pants

Coming this summer, I promise!

Kilgore Trout – this is our Native American roll which incorporates, what used to be, staple foods of the Indians of the Eastern Woodlands. Hickory smoked wild rainbow trout, sun dried mulberries, white walnuts, string beans, and squash rolled up in a mixture of wild rose and sassafras scented wild rice and organic corn. Do not dip in soy sauce. Dip into fresh horseradish, wild celery and wild cherry infused maple syrup soy vinegar. This roll will be unveiled for a few wednesday night specials this summer! Thank you for patiently waiting! 00.00

*We will not accept money for this roll. We will accept wampum (sea shells were used as currency by the Iroquois)

Seriously, almost here!

Secret On The Vine - this drink is named after and inspired by my co-conspirator Gabriel Cruz' (aka Pierre Bourgeois) newest song, which is about the intoxicating force that both animates the universe, and that inspires humanity to eat, drink, make love, and create. A dozen different spices, herbs, and sunflower honey sweetened cabernet sake, slowly simmered and served warm. Designed to be shared among groups of friends and lovers; served in a bountiful communal cup made by co-conspirator and sculptor Sean Peterson. "You can listen to his songs and learn how to live" is what Bob Dylan said about Woodie Guthrie. This is what Pierre's music does to me. This is what Sean Peterson's sculpture does to me. People like them elevate eating and drinking to a spiritual experience. Music is sacred. All of art is sacred and eating and drinking is too. This combines and ritualizes three sacred cosmic arts; music, eating (and drinking) and sculpture. 00.00

*This intoxicating force cannot be bought. Always free for special occasions.

Overheard while sipping sake:

"I have conversations here that I don't have anywhere else."

"This is the only restaurant where I really don't talk because I am enjoying the food too much!"

"I don't think when I eat something like this (The Softest French Kisses) . This is like reading Nabokov. This hits you somewhere between the shoulder blades."

"I work at the VA. I have a patient there that I have to give shots to. As an incentive, I give her a piece of sushi from my lunch. One day, after I had given her a piece of sushi, she beamed and said "Mmmmmmmm Miya's Sushi!" I swear to you, I never told her where the sushi was from."

"I remember Michael telling me that he'd been coming to Miya's for ten years. "Man, you must be old," I thought. I look around now; some of these people were in elementary school when I first started coming. It kind of just hits you like "Oh my God." I remember thinking at the time, if I'd been here for ten years, I'm a loser. Now, I've been here for fourteen. Man, I've been eating here for fourteen years!"

"This place is to sushi what Jazz was to music. The first time they heard it they were like "What is this?" People were offended by Jazz. You had these guys doing amazing music that lots of people didn't understand. It feels like Jazz at Miya's."

"You are a normal guy. People who work at Miya's are all normal guys. And, the people who come here are not pretentious. They are sophisticated but not pretentious. The menu makes fun of itself. What you are saying to people is that you don't have to be a pretentious gourmand to appreciate adventurous food; it's okay to have chocolate chips with eel."

"This is not fusion but greater than that. It is internationalist. This is the kind of food that you'd expect on the Starship Enterprise that would be created in the replicator. A little bit of Scotty, a little bit of Kirk, a little bit of Ohara, a little bit of Checkov and a little bit of Sulu to represent earth food to the rest of the universe."

In the works...

Traditional sushi...I will approximate recipes from when sushi came from freshwater rivers. To alleviate the possibility of parasitic infection, the fish would have to be frozen first, before we eat it. The sushi would be prepared from carp, bass, trout, sunfish and pickerel. I will age some of the fish in heavily vinegared rice, preparing it in an ancient way. I imagine fresh water fish to taste earthier than saltwater. Yum?

Religious Foods... Currently, I am working on food and drink's place in religion. Eventually, I want to create a cuisine based on how people have used food to facilitate a relationship with "God" or whatever force it is that is greater than what man is in that particular religion. For starters, I am going to be meeting up with my good friend, Bruce Blair, who is the Buddhist Chaplain at Yale and have a conversation.

Moonshine... Eventually, our sakes will evolve into a corn based distillate, more like old fashioned moonshine. Native Americans have been fermenting beverages from corn for thousands of years. When Irish and Scottish immigrants brought whiskey to America, they it evolved into a corn based whiskey. There's no alcoholic beverage that better embodies America - in it's use of it's central ingredient, corn, and in the fact that it represents cultural evolution and the American spirit of revolution. I'm going to go live with some small time Kentucky moonshiners to absorb their spirit. I will then come back and put the holy grail of American booze on it's head by evolving it into recipes like the Chinese Firecraker for Miya's.

Soul Food... There is no cuisine that is more American than it. There are no people who are more significant to the creation of American culture than African Americans. Soul Food is the result of practical and creative adaptation of African eating to the New World. However, unhealthy ways of modern eating have often rendered Soul Food anything but soulful. Since the largest single portion of African slaves came from (Bight of Biafra) (Nigeria) (25.1% of the all slaves), I will marry various indiginous cuisines from that region to popular Soul Food recipes. I will also create a healthier cuisine with more of an African beat. All ethnic groups in America have health problems due, in no small part, to our modern, low nutrient, high calorie diet. To eat healthy, we must reach back into our ethnic food histories in order to forge ahead.

Bun Lai - 2010 nominee for Best Connecticut Chef
Flavors Of Connecticut

26 time winner - Best Overall Restaurant, Best Sushi
& Best Japanese Restaurant,
The Advocate Reader's Poll, 1983 - 2009

Best Of Show, 2004 & 2005
Taste Of The Nation

"If there is a more creative or passionate restauranteur, we have not met him yet."
Connecticut Magazine.

"The food was unique, precisely seasoned, beautifully prepared and presented - the best one can hope for in an original cuisine."
The New York Times.

"The search for the best sushi ends at an unprepssessing eatery on the western edge of Yale's campus. Miya's serves the state's most inventive and artfully presented Japanese creations."
Fairfield Magazine.

"Bun Lai performed the seemingly impossible and assembled the most incredible combination of food stuffs, turning out one brilliant creation after the other..."
Offshore Magazine.

"The cozy decor; the waiters who know your name and favorite dish after you have eaten there twice; and the general sense of brio, elan, eclat, panache - pick your favorite unusual word to describe this most unusual sushi joint, a sushi restaurant with the spirit of a bar and the comfiness of a diner."
New Haven Advocate.

"The courage to present such radical dishes is rare and admirable, but the ability to make them all appetizing is extraordinary."
The Yale Daily News.

"I went to Miya's twice last week and I'd like to add a few words of my own 1) Oh 2) My 3) God!"